

inside *this issue*

page 2-3: 2005 Rural Awards
Winners

page 4: Focus on Obesity Resources

page 5: SHIP Grantee Highlights

MARYLAND *Care*

Maryland Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

Family Health Administration Office
of Health Policy and Planning
201 West Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
www.mdpublichealth.org

To contribute articles,
contact: Stacy M. Kidd, Program
Manager, Maryland State Office of
Rural Health at
410-767-5942 • Fax: 410-333-7501
skidd@dhmh.state.md.us

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.
Governor

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Lt. Governor

S. Anthony McCann
Secretary, DHMH



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUE HEADLINES EIGHTH ANNUAL RURAL MARYLAND SUMMIT

Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship were dominant themes for the Eighth Annual Rural Summit held at the Wisp Deep Creek Mountain Resort in McHenry, Garrett County on October 27 - 28. More than 130 rural healthcare and business leaders from across Maryland gathered for two days to participate in sessions addressing the challenges of creating and maintaining an adequate workforce and opportunities for entrepreneurs in the state's rural areas.

Robert W. Seurkamp, Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, presented an update on the board's latest initiatives to tackle Maryland's growing need for healthcare professionals.

Patrick Cassidy of the National Association of Workforce Investment Boards and Daniel McDermott with the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board presented a nationally recognized model developed on the Eastern Shore for channeling workers displaced from other industries into healthcare careers. The model included job fairs and individual counseling at a plant that was closing, along with information on alternative care resources for workers who were losing their health insurance. An illustration of the model's effectiveness was a displaced line worker's participation in a career day for high school students while he was still re-training to be a surgical technologist.

Dr. Eric Pages' plenary workshop focused on strategies for creating employment opportunities through fostering entrepreneurship in our rural areas. Dr. Pages expanded on the theme, which he offered last July at Maryland's first Rural Entrepreneurship Academy, in which the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care Services is an active partner.

Panelists from Maryland's community colleges and the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) discussed their local educational initiatives for expanding Maryland's health care workforce. The colleges and AHECs highlighted their collaboration in developing a program that increases the number of dental hygienists serving in Maryland's rural areas.

The sessions set the stage for the Ninth Annual Rural Summit scheduled for October 26 - 27, 2006 in Cecil County.

2005 RURAL AWARDS WINNERS

The Awards Luncheon at the annual rural summit is the most exciting time of the year for Rural Maryland. It is the time to recognize, appreciate and honor individuals and organizations for their outstanding achievements in our rural communities. The following awards were presented during the 2005 Maryland Rural Summit:

OUTSTANDING RURAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER AWARD:

Michael A. Stevens is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has been instrumental in designing and administering programs focused on the delivery of services to at-risk populations in Allegany County for more than 30 years. He helped design and administer service delivery through the Patient and Family Caregiver Support Program. This Program started in the county in 2002 and currently provides services to approximately 40 people annually who would be left vulnerable without this funding and ultimately at-risk for institutionalization. These services have been valuable in improving the quality of life for recipients. Mr. Stevens has also administered the Senior Care Program for the past 30 years, which provides in-home assistance and funding to low-income persons aged 65 and older with the goal of preventing premature nursing home placement. Mr. Stevens is well respected in the local community for his experience and expertise, not only in the field of geriatrics, but also in the field of community and public service. The programs that he initiated or influenced over the last 30 years have exhibited longevity and integrity, as well as lending hope and compassion to Allegany County residents.

OUTSTANDING RURAL HEALTH PROGRAM AWARD:

Garrett County is identified as a Health Professional Shortage Area for dentists as well as for primary care providers. In the past, the dentist to resident ratio in

Garrett County was one to 2,993 - a far higher ratio than the recommended ratio of one dentist to every 1,300 residents. The Garrett County Health Department responded to this need by taking the lead role in developing the **Garrett County Dental Network**. The Network has successfully negotiated a higher rate of reimbursement for dentists in the county. The Garrett County Health Department (GCHD) has: assisted network dentists with claims submission; guaranteed payment for valid claims; initiated a public health dental clinic; and renewed its efforts in community health education focusing on dental care. The network of community dentists provides dental care for MCHP and MA patients in their offices or in the GCHD dental clinic. These changes combined with the GCHD's guaranteed payment commitment and their role as a "middle-man" between the MCOs and dentists resulted in an increase in the number of dentists seeing MCHP and MA patients from 3 to five in the County.

OUTSTANDING RURAL HEALTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

Wicomico County has the third highest gun-crime rate per capita in Maryland, just behind Baltimore City and Prince George's County. Considering it is a largely rural county, with a population of more than 84,000, this is an alarming statistic. The county's Weed and Seed Program, funded through the Department of Justice, brings together local, state, and federal law enforcement, social service providers, representatives of

public and private sectors, business owners, and residents in a shared goal of "weeding" out violent crime while "seeding" in social services and economic revitalization. The initiative, funded through a Project Safe Neighborhood grant, went about centralizing and standardizing data collection in order to better share information. A special task force has created the Crime Prevention Program and, most significantly, the **Wicomico County EXILE Program**, which informs high-school aged youth about the consequences of gun possession and gun crime and to give them guidelines for making positive life choices. Since the majority of gun crimes in the area are committed by individuals aged 15-22, EXILE is an important element of the overall program.

OUTSTANDING RURAL LEGISLATOR AWARD:

Delegate Robert McKee, from District 2A in Washington County, was recognized for his leadership in securing substantial and ongoing sources of funding for both the Maryland Agricultural education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and the Maryland Agricultural and Resources Based Industry Development Corporation initiative passed in 2000 that provides grant funding to rural nonprofits and community colleges involved in agricultural education, and rural business and community development. The Governor and General Assembly created MARBIDCO in 2004, which is modeled on other state development corporations that help the technology and manufacturing sectors, is slated to provide much-needed financial, business planning, and marketing assistance to Maryland's agricultural, forestry and seafood businesses.

2005 RURAL AWARDS WINNERS (continued from cover page 2)

Delegate David Rudolph, from District 34B in Cecil County, is a senior member of the House Health and Government Operations Committee and chairs its Pharmaceuticals Subcommittee. In addition to playing a vitally important role in advocating for MARBIDCO's funding during the 2005 Session, Delegate Rudolph also championed rural prescription drug access. Delegate Rudolph and his committee led the debate in the House of Delegates, and ultimately House Bills 1143 and 1287 were signed into law. The new Maryland Prescription Drug Program was designed to achieve significant savings on the cost of prescription drugs for state employees and retirees. Additionally, Delegate Rudolph must be commended for his leadership and work on House Bill 324, which creates the new Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program to provide state subsidies for a portion of the costs of Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage premiums and deductibles. Delegate Rudolph has been a guiding force in organizing a group of concerned citizens in western Cecil County to develop a proposal for a Federally Qualified Health center in the Conowingo area.

SPECIAL LEGISLATOR RECOGNITION:
Senator John J. Hafer was recognized as a long-time advocate for rural human service agencies, and for consistently championing the rights of vulnerable populations in Western Maryland and throughout the State. Senator Hafer, a member of the Senate since 1991, has been instrumental in a partnership between the Allegany County Area Agency on Aging and the Beverly Health Care Foundation for enhanced nutrition for seniors at the Cumberland Senior Center. This is a pilot project that will be replicated at other HRDC-operated

senior centers in Allegany County. It is our misfortune that Senator Hafer is retiring this year.

OUTSTANDING RURAL VOLUNTEER

AWARD:

The Outstanding Rural Volunteer Award is given to an individual for leadership, dedication, and noteworthy volunteer achievement beyond the call of one's professional duties. **Annie K. Kronk, Ph.D.** retired in 2001 as The Johns Hopkins University's Director of State and Local Affairs and Special Assistant to the President, a position she held for nearly 20 years. In that capacity, she managed the university's governmental affairs program, and was the registered lobbyist for state and local fiscal and policy issues. Since her retirement, Annie spends much of her free time volunteering with the Rural Maryland Council, where she serves as First Vice Chair and Chair of the Health Care Working Committee. She remains active in the Maryland Rural Health Association, where she served on the board of directors for many years, and in numerous civic, church and community organizations. Over the past 18 months, Annie led her colleagues on the RMC's Health Care Working Committee and the Legislative/Policy Committee of the Maryland Rural Health Association in researching issues related to Medicare Part D, the new federal prescription drug program and its impacts on Maryland's state pharmacy programs.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD:
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission has developed an array of programs to help the five County region,

including Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties, make the transition from a tobacco-based economy to an economy supported by the production and sale of healthful farm grown products. The scope of the Commission's programs is broad. Those programs include: Agricultural Land Preservation, a Marketing Southern Maryland Initiative, Agribusiness Development and Agritourism, and Leadership and Entrepreneurial Education components.

OUTSTANDING RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AWARD:

The **Eastern Shore Land Conservancy's** mission is to sustain the Eastern Shore's rich landscapes through strategic land conservation and sound land use planning. Since 1990, ESLC has preserved 196 properties totaling 36,405 acres in the six mid and upper shore counties of Dorchester, Caroline, Talbot, Queen Anne's, Kent and Cecil. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy's vision for 2050 is an Eastern Shore where towns are vibrant and well defined; farms, forests, and fisheries are thriving and scenic; and historic, natural, and riverine landscapes are maintained.



FOCUS ON OBESITY: RESOURCES

SAVE THE DATE

Results from the 1999-2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), using measured heights and weights, indicate that an estimated 16 percent of children and adolescents ages 6-19 years are overweight, and that an estimated 65 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/obese/obse99.htm>).

In Maryland, the prevalence of obesity among adults and children is increasing. Nutrition and activity level play a vitally important role in combating childhood and adult obesity in the State. The following links will be especially useful to public health professionals, local community groups, schools, and individuals in gaining access to important health information related to combating obesity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) MyPyramid Plan can help your patients make healthier food choices from every food group and find a balance between food and physical activity. MyPyramid, available online at www.mypyramid.gov, replaces the Food Guide Pyramid.

Tips for Using the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children 2 to 6 Years Old can help parents teach their young child what to eat to grow and stay healthy. It is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, 202-512-1800 and at www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/PyrBook.pdf

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Across Your Lifespan: Helping Your Child provides additional in-depth information for parents. Available from the Weight-control Information Network (WIN), 1-877-946-4627 and at www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs/parentips/tipsforparents.htm

<http://www.kidnetic.com/> (provides healthy eating and physical activity tips for kids and parents)

<http://www.kidshealth.org/> (provides information about nutrition and fitness for kids)

<http://www.bam.gov/> (answers health questions about body and mind)

<http://www.verbnow.com/> (encourages kids to get physically active)

http://www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/index.html (CDC webpage for kids)

<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/understanding.htm> (focuses on adult obesity)

Weight-control Information Network
1 WIN WAY
BETHESDA, MD 20892-3665
Phone: (202) 828-1025
FAX: (202) 828-1028
E-mail: win@info.niddk.nih.gov
Internet: <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov>
Toll-free number: 1-877-946-4627

The 2006 Maryland Rural Summit
The Maryland Rural Summit will be held from October 25-27, 2006 at Sandy Cove in Cecil County, Maryland. The theme of the summit will be the many implications that rapid growth has, and will have, on rural communities. Participate in this important event and share your thoughts and experiences with rural leaders and elected officials from across Maryland. For more information visit www.rural.state.md.us.

Nominate your Rural Leader for a Maryland Rural Impact Award

Nomination deadline is September 1, 2006.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Dr. Anirban Basu

www.rural.state.md.us



SHIP GRANTEE HIGHLIGHT: GARRETT COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

The State Office of Rural Health administers the Federal funding designated for Maryland's three SHIP (Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program) grantees: The Edward W. McCready Memorial Hospital, Garrett County Memorial Hospital, and Atlantic General Hospital. The SHIP grant provides a small stipend to federally designated rural hospitals for initiatives focusing on HIPAA, Quality Assurance, and Prospective Payment Systems. This month, we highlight Garrett County Memorial Hospital (GCMH) located in Oakland, Maryland. The following excerpt is taken from the GCMH website: <http://www.gcmh.com>.

Garrett County Memorial Hospital (GCMH) was established in 1950 through the generosity of George W. Loar. The facility originally opened its doors operating with 30 patient beds, an emergency room, a laboratory, an X-ray department and an operating room – later cardiac care, intensive care, and labor and delivery rooms were added. Currently, GCMH is a 61-bed, not-for-profit, acute care facility situated in the Appalachian mountain region of Western Maryland.

Today GCMH enjoys strong community support. The facility houses a Family-Centered Maternity Suite as well as a 10-bed Subacute Unit. The emergency room, which sees about 18,000 patients annually, is fully staffed and open 24 hours daily. Renovations continue to occur throughout the facility to further enhance the delivery of healthcare services while striving to reduce costs.

As the third largest employer in Garrett County, GCMH is supported by a staff of 320 professional, highly skilled employees backed by state of the art equipment. The hospital's medical staff is primarily comprised of a qualified team of family care physicians who combine

their expertise with that of specialists in the fields of dentistry, dermatology, general surgery, gynecology, ophthalmology, orthopedic surgery, pathology, podiatry, and radiology.



Sandy Swanson, Chief Information Officer, commenting on the SHIP grant's value said:

"Countless thanks for the SHIP grants that have been so instrumental in our HIPAA efforts and QI projects. In the last few years, thanks to the SHIP grant, we have been able to purchase privacy screens used to protect the privacy of patients in high-traffic areas within the hospital. The funds were also used to purchase a firewall so our physicians could access their patient's data securely over a Virtual Private Network (VPN). Additionally, funds were used to invest in workforce development, specifically in the area of Protected Health Information (PHI)."

"In 2003, we used some of the grant funds for temporary staffing for Chart Review and trending of data for several Quality Improvement projects. Our QI office upgraded their computer capabilities and added functionality not previously available. Over the last two years, our SHIP grant was mainly used to help us achieve compliance with the HIPAA Security Rule. We purchased a Network Security Scanner and site licenses to help us in our security monitoring efforts. The grant has allowed us to: implement security training sessions and purchase progress monitoring tools; purchase automatic locks for our training center and physician mailbox office doors to restrict public access; and to upgrade many workstations to Windows XP, with better security options and greater control over what users can do with their workstations. While we are not completely finished replacing all Windows 98 workstations, the grant funds have accelerated this process greatly. In an era of scarce resources in rural healthcare, the SHIP grant funds have been used in a wide variety of projects to assist us as we move toward HIPAA compliance and new QI functionality."

LIKE TO SHARE NEWS FROM YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS?

This publication is for you, so make it yours!

Submit articles, anecdotes, and/or comments to:

Stacy Kidd
DHMH - Maryland State Office of Rural Health
201 W. Preston Street, Room 423
Baltimore, MD 21201

MARYLAND *Care*
Unit #108

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
State Office of Rural Health
201 West Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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